



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mary Lincoln's cameo keepsakes are artifacts of the month for March

Each month, a different major artifact from the recently acquired Taper Collection will be featured at the Lincoln Presidential Museum

SPRINGFIELD – Cameos belonging to Mary Lincoln, featuring photos and locks of hair from her husband and son, are the artifacts of the month for March at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM), the latest in a series featuring key items from the Taper Collection recently acquired by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation.

“Photography remained expensive and a little strange to some people even until the 1850s, so the old way of remembering a loved one by keeping a lock of hair endured for a while,” said ALPLM Lincoln Curator James Cornelius. “Some people, including Mary Lincoln, combined the two ways, placing a lock from her most beloved child Willie and, later, one from her ‘dear, devoted husband’ Abraham into cameo portraits of them.”

Each lock of hair in the cameos is tied with a tiny black ribbon. A cameo of Mary contains her hair tied with a pink ribbon.

“Willie died in the White House at age 11, less than a year after the Lincolns had moved in,” Cornelius explained. “This was a harrowing event for both parents, a permanent scar on their souls, even a providential warning to them, they felt, about their own places on earth. Mary Lincoln treasured these keepsakes until her own sad end in 1882. They remain perhaps the most evocative pieces of her bedside table.”

The cameos will be removed from public display on March 31, and another key artifact from the Taper Collection will take its place.

The artifacts of the month are displayed in the central case in the Presidential Museum's Treasures Gallery and include interpretive text explaining their significance. These displays will also highlight the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation's Permanent Home Campaign. The \$27-million fundraising drive, established to ensure that the 1,500-item Louise and Barry Taper Collection remains together as a collection and is preserved in perpetuity for the benefit of the public, began in 2008 and continues through 2013.

The story of the March 2011 artifacts as told by the ALPLM's Lincoln Curator may be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SznfLF8M9Ec>. A podcast may be accessed at <http://ow.ly/44Qvm>

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, in partnership with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, offers monthly artifact sponsorships entitled "An Evening of Wine, a Nibble of Cheese, and A Hint of History." The private events, hosted by a Lincoln historian, highlight a featured artifact from the Taper Collection and include light hors d'oeuvres and wine for a select number of guests. For more information on how to become a sponsor or to donate to the Permanent Home Campaign, contact Phyllis Maynerich at (217) 557-6250 or pmaynerich@alplm.org. Event sponsorships are tax deductible as allowed by law.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation supports the educational and cultural programming of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum; fosters Lincoln scholarship through the acquisition and publication of documentary materials relating to Lincoln and his era; and promotes a greater appreciation of history through exhibits, conferences, publications, online services, and other activities designed to promote historical literacy.

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